

The Hazards of "Sippy Cups"

Easy, spill-proof way to get through the day... or get cavities?

Sippy cups are not a needed step in your child's development. Many children prefer an open cup, and that is best.



Sippy cups are handy, but **long-term and frequent use** can lead to **cavities**

(early childhood caries or tooth decay). If left untreated, **pain and infection** can result.

Baby teeth are needed to guide permanent teeth into the correct spot. If baby teeth are pulled early, it could **affect the growth of permanent teeth, a child's speech and chewing.**

Tips for Parents

- ◆ Wean a child from the bottle by age one.
- ◆ If you choose to use sippy cups, use them only as a halfway step between bottles and open cups. Do not let your child carry them around throughout the whole day (unless filled with water only).
- ◆ 20 minutes after every sip, bacteria in the mouth produce the acid that causes cavities.
- ◆ Encourage use of open cups with your help at meal and snack times (for milk, water, or 100% juice).



- ◆ Put water in sippy cups rather than formula or full-strength sweetened beverages like juice, sweetened tea, lemonade, or soda pop.
- ◆ The best sippy cups to protect against cavities are those with rubber straws that fold down and are not spill-proof. Take spill-proof part (the valve) out of your cup if you have one.

For more information on child nutrition or dental health see:

www.healthysd.gov or <http://doh.sd.gov/oralhealth>

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